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FM AMCONSUL MUMBAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7095
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 8324
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 2031
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 1822
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0028
RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0013
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 2282

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUMBAI 000151

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP - JILL NYSTROM; PASS TO DHS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: C1/D VISAS: SMOOTH SAILING IN MUMBAI

REF: 05 MUMBAI 1639, 04 MUMBAI 2613

¶1. SUMMARY. ConGen Mumbai, one of the top C1/D visa adjudicating posts in the world, issued more than 16,000 C1/D visas in FY2008. A recent validation study confirmed an overstay rate of less than one percent. Post's Shipping Executive Program (SEP), which allocates appointments for well-established shipping companies that maintain high recruiting and reporting standards, aided post's adjudications. END SUMMARY.

¶2. In FY2008, Mumbai issued 16,696 C1/D visas and refused 2,011, a refusal rate of 10.7 percent. FY2008 issuances were up 1.7 percent compared to FY2007. In FY2007 post issued 16,417 C1/D visas and refused 1,525(8.4 percent).

SHIPPING EXECUTIVE PROGRAM

¶3. Many C1/D visa applicants were recruited by post's SEP member companies, which includes 12 large ship crew recruitment agencies and three major airlines (reftels). Of 18,980 C1/D visa appointments made in Mumbai during FY2008, 8,387 (44.2%) were from SEP companies. SEP companies, who undergo a screening process before gaining membership, use their own login to schedule visa appointments through our visa appointment scheduler's website and provide official letters for their applicants that contain the company seal, an authorized signature, and other security features. Post also requires them to notify us of all individuals who do not report for duty as scheduled for duty. (Note: Posts considering implementing a Shipping Executive Program, may write to MumbaiSEP@state.gov for more details.)

¶4. The NIV officer responsible for managing the SEP portfolio also maintains lists of shipping companies or agents labeled as "Caution" and "Delisted" companies. Applicants from delisted companies are adjudicated with extreme caution based on previous malfeasance or ongoing concerns about the companies' hiring practices. Applicants from Caution companies are adjudicated with extra care based on questionable past and current hiring practices. Companies not on any list are considered "neutral."

VALIDATION METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

¶5. The validation study randomly selected 1,000 applicants from the 16,696 C1/D visas issued during FY2008. Arrival and Departure Information System (ADIS) checks were conducted for all the cases. The ADIS checks confirmed departures for 856 visa holders. Post made separate verification and pretext calls for the remaining 144 cases. In most instances, calls to the employers revealed the visa holders had departed the United States. In other cases, post called residences and spoke to family members, or to visaholders themselves, to verify

departure. Post suspected or confirmed fraud or overstays in only nine of the 1,000 cases, a rate of only 0.9 percent.

¶16. For seven cases, verification calls to employers confirmed the visa holders failed to join ship as scheduled or did not depart the United States after signing off their ship. The overstays were a mixture of new visa holders and those with previous visas and travel to the United States.

¶17. In the remaining two cases, post suspected, but could not confirm, fraud or overstays. Although the visa holders were not found in ADIS as having departed the United States, calls to their family did not reveal conclusive evidence to confirm fraud. One of the visa holders was a trainee seaman and the other a long-term seaman with more than twenty-five years of experience. Both had previous C1/D visas and had traveled to the United States before.

¶18. Post last conducted a C1/D validation study in 2005. Based on 250 C1/D visas issued in July 2005, the study found a visa misuse rate of 5.6 percent. Given the larger sample size, and therefore more reliable results, of the new validation study, the drop in the fraud rate to less than 0.9 percent is a significant decrease.

COMMENT

¶19. A minor but possibly useful finding of the study was that seven of the nine errant visa holders were joining passenger cruise ships, primarily in food service work. Future C1/D validation studies might seek to test the premise that employees joining cruise ships are more likely to commit fraud than commercial seafarers.

MUMBAI 00000151 002 OF 002

¶10. A surprising finding was that no significant difference existed in fraud rates of SEP and non-SEP companies. If no SEP program had been in place, however, the fraud rate likely would have been higher. We still believe the SEP has a useful deterrent effect. Post will continue to work closely with SEP companies to improve their internal controls.

¶11. Mumbai's high volume of C1/D applicants, a refusal rate of less than 11 percent, and a fraud rate below one percent indicate sound C1/D visa adjudication practices. The Shipping Executive Program remains a reliable anchor underpinning this excellent track record. End Comment.
FOLMSBEE